

[Acx I

I know that all men are monsters. [*Lady Windermere rings bell.*] The only thing to do is to feed the wretches well. A good cook does wonders, and that I know you have. My

dear Margaret, you are not going to cry? [*Lady |Yir*.dertnere'*] You needn't be afraid, Duchess, I never cry.

Duchess of Berwick. That's quite right, dear. Cry ing is the refuge of plain women but the ruin of pretty ones. Agatha, darling!

Lady Agctiha. [*Entering L.*] Yes, mamma.

Duchess of Berwick. Come and bid good-bye to Lady

Windermere, and thank her for your charming visit.

[*Coming down again.*] And by the way, I must thank you for sending a

card to Mr. Hopper—he 's that rich young Australian people

are taking such notice of just at present. His father made

a great fortune by selling some kind of food in circular tins—

most palatable, I believe—I fancy it is the thing the servants

always refuse to eat. But the son is quite interesting. I

think he's attracted by dear Agatha's clever talk. Of

course, we should be very sorry to lose her, but I think

that a mother who doesn't part with a daughter every

season has no real affection. We're coming to-night, dear.

[*Parker opens C doors.*] And remember my advice, take the

poor fellow out of town at once, it is the only thing to do.

Good-bye, once more; come, Agatha.

[*Exeunt Duchess and Lady Agatha C.*]
Lady Windermere. How horrible! I understand

now what Lord

Darlington meant by the imaginary instance of the couple

not two years married. Oh! it can't be true—she spoke of

enormous sums of money paid to this woman. I know

where Arthur keeps his bank book—in one of the drawers of

that desk. I might find out by that. I will find out.

[*Opens drawer^*] No, it is some hideous mistake. [*Rises and goes C.*] Some silly scandal! He loves me I He

loves me! But why should I not look? I am his wife, I have a right

to look! [*Returns to bureau, takes out book and examines it*

page by page, smiles and gives a sigh of relief.] I knew it!

there is not a word of truth in this stupid story. [*Puts book*

back in drawer. As she does so, starts and takes out another

book.] A second book—private—locked! [*Tries to open it,*

but fails. Sees paper knife on bureau, and with it cuts cover

from book. Begins to start at the first page.] "Mrs. Erlynne—£600—Mrs. Erlynne—£700—Mrs. Erlynne—£400."

Oh! it is true! It is true! How horrible! [*Throws book on floor.*]